

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

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TAGS: PINT, PFOR, FR

SUBJECT: HELSINGOR AND PARIS -- THE SOCIALISTS TAKE

STOCK

REF: PARIS 02487

SUMMARY. FRANCOIS MITTERRAND AND THE FRENCH SOCIALISTS (PS) ARE MILDLY DISAPPOINTED BY THE RESULTS OF TWO WEEKS OF HIGH-LEVEL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES. WHERE THEY HAD HOPED, SOMEWHAT IN SPITE OF THEMSELVES, FOR AT LEAST NORTHERN ACQUIESCENCE IN THE "SOUTHERN ROAD" (SOCIALIST ALLIANCES WITH THE NATIONAL COMMUNIST PARTIES), THEY FOUND THEMSELVES BEING HECTORED BY SCHMIDT AND THE NORTHERNERS. WHERE MITTERRAND HAD HOPED TO COME OUT OF HELSINGOR WITH AN IMAGE OF RESPONSIBILITY BASED ON CALMLY REASONED DISCUSSIONS OF EUROPEAN SECURITY IN THE EVENT OF LEFT VICTORIES IN FRANCE, ITALY AND PORTUGAL, HE WAS IN FACT PUT ON THE DEFENSIVE. THE PARIS MEETING OF SOUTHERN SOCIALIST PARTIES WAS ALSO DISAPPOINTING: MITTERRAND HAD HOPED TO SHOW THAT THERE WAS SOME UNITY OF THOUGHT AMONG THE MAJOR SOUTHERN PARTIES. HE IS NOW SAYING, AT LEAST PRIVATELY, THAT CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING AND DISCUSSION OF COMMON PROBLEMS WAS A MUCH MORE IMPORTANT PART OF THE PARIS CONFERENCE THAN "PAPER EXPRESSIONS OF COMMON ROADS TO FOLLOW." MITTERRAND WILL, OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS, GIVE GREATER EXPRESSION TO HIS OFTEN-REPEATED BELIEF THAT "OBJECTIVE NATIONAL CONDITIONS" ARE THE ONLY POSSIBLE STANDARD FOR JUDGING THE CONDUCT OF A SOCIALIST PARTY. END SUMMARY.

1. THE PS MOOD PRIOR TO HELSINGOR: BEFORE GOING TO HELSINGOR, MITTERRAND WAS TELLING CONFIDANTS THAT THE NORTHERNERS WERE UNABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE "SIMPLE POLITICAL GIVENS" OF THE FRENCH AND SPANISH SITUATIONS. AN EQUALLY IMPORTANT PRE-MEETING FACTOR WAS MITTERRAND'S DISAPPOINTMENT OVER THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT HELMUT SCHMIDT WOULD SPEAK FOR THE SPD. MITTERRAND'S REACTIONS TO SCHMIDT ARE VISCERAL AND NEGATIVE -- HE NEITHER TRUSTS NOR RESPECTS THE FRG PRIME MINISTER -- AND THE PS HAD HOPED THAT THE SPD WOULD SHOW ENOUGH TACT TO ALLOW THE NORTHERN MESSAGE TO BE DELIVERED BY MITTERRAND'S FRIEND

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WILLY BRANDT. WHY THEN, DID MITTERRAND WANT TO ATTEND THE MEETING? DISCUSSIONS WITH PS OFFICIALS SUGGEST THAT

-- IDEALLY, MITTERRAND WOULD HAVE LIKED TO COME OUT OF HELSINGOR WITH SOME NORTHERN EXPRESSION OF CONFIDENCE IN THE PS' ABILITY TO DOMINATE ITS ALLIANCE WITH THE PCF, TO KEEP DOWN COMMUNIST INFLUENCE AND TO CONTINUE FRANCE'S ROLE IN THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE SHOULD THE UNITED LEFT COME TO POWER;

-- THE PS WANTED TO BE SURE THAT NORTH/SOUTH
DISCUSSIONS WERE NOT RESTRICTED TO A SCHMIDT/
WILSON/SOARES CONVERSATION;
-- MORE REALISTICALLY, MITTERRAND HAD HOPED FOR
AN OPEN "AIRING OF DIFFERENCES" WHICH, ONCE
OUT OF THE WAY, WOULD HAVE LED TO A DISCUSSION
OF THE PROSPECTS FOR EUROPEAN SECURITY IN THE
EVENT OF LEFT VICTORIES IN LATIN EUROPE.
MITTERRAND BELIEVED THAT SUCH A DISCUSSION
AMONG SOCIALIST PEERS WOULD BE USEFUL FOR THE
PS IN PRESENTING IT AS AN EQUAL TO THE SPD,
THE PARTY CONSIDERED TO BE MOST "RELIABLE" ON
EUROPEAN SECURITY MATTERS;

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-- MITTERRAND BELIEVED THAT IN ANY CASE THE HELSINGOR MEETING WOULD BE PRIVATE, WOULD ATTRACT LITTLE PUBLIC NOTICE AND WOULD BE A DIGNIFIED EXCHANGE AMONG EQUALS.

2. WHAT THE PS BELIEVES HAPPENED AT HELSINGOR: IN FACT, THE SITUATION AT HELSINGOR EVOLVED FAR BEYOND ANY OF THE SCENARIOS WHICH THE PS HAD ENVISAGED. MITTERRAND AND HIS STAFFERS BELIEVE THAT SCHMIDT, THE AUSTRIANS AND THE BRITISH TOOK THE OCCASION TO EMBARRASS, IRRITATE AND SCOLD THE PS. MORE IMPORTANT, MITTERRAND BELIEVES THAT SCHMIDT'S "INDICTMENT" OF THE PS LEAVES MOST EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS WITH THE CHOICE OF BELIEVING THAT THE PS IS EITHER NAIVE OR MALEVOLENT. TWO NORTHERN CONCERNS DID REACH MITTERRAND, HOWEVER. HE BECAME AWARE, PERHAPS FOR THE FIRST TIME (SEE PARIS 31727 OF DECEMBER 5, 1975) OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE NORTHERNERS SAW IN THE PARIS CONFERENCE AN ATTEMPT TO BREAK THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL. GERARD JAQUET, A SENIOR MITTERRAND COUNSELOR, SAYS THAT AT HELSINGOR "MITTERRAND, WHO HAD THOUGHT HE WAS APPLYING SOME GENTLE ARM-TWISTING, GOT TOLD THAT HE WAS TRYING TO CASTRATE A GOOD FRIEND -- SO HE BACKED OFF, STARTLED AND SHOCKED." PERHAPS AS A WAY OF MAKING UP, THROUGHOUT THE PARIS CONFERENCE MITTERRAND WOULD STRESS THE CLOSE TIES OF ALL THE PARTICIPANTS TO THE INTERNATIONAL AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE CONFERENCE REFLECTED CONCERNS FELT BY THE ENTIRE INTERNATIONAL.

3. SECURITY -- THE SECOND CONCERN: MITTERRAND ALSO REALIZED THAT THE NORTHERNERS HAVE A REAL CONCERN ABOUT THE EXTENT TO WHICH UNITED LEFT VICTORIES (WHICH IMPLY THE PARTICIPATION OF COMMUNISTS IN NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS) COULD UPSET EUROPEAN SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS. HE HAD HEARD

THAT CONCERN EXPRESSED MANY TIMES BEFORE, BUT HELSINGOR ADDED A NEW DIMENSION. BRANDT AND MITTERRAND PRIVATELY DISCUSSED SECURITY QUESTIONS AT HELSINGOR AND SENIOR PS STAFFERS DESCRIBE MITTERRAND AS HAVING BEEN "JOLTED" BY BRANDT'S INSISTENCE ON ALLIED CONCERNS. PERHAPS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT TO MITTERRAND WAS THE EXTENT TO WHICH VARIOUS SOUTHERNERS (SPAIN'S GONZALEZ, SOARES) ASKED

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POINTED QUESTIONS ABOUT EUROPEAN SECURITY.

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4. THE SOUTHERN ROAD DIDN'T LEAD TO HELSINGOR: MITTERRAND'S PS HAS LONG FELT THAT SCHMIDT AND THE BRITISH SEEK TO DOMINATE THE SOCIALIST WORLD'S RELATIONS WITH THE IBERIAN PENINSULA. THE GERMANS AND THE BRITISH, BEING AT THE HEADS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS, HAVE EFFECTIVELY CONTROLLED THE FINANCIAL AID FLOWING TO BOTH THE GOVERNMENT OF PORTUGAL AND TO THE PORTUGUESE SOCIALISTS. IN TURN, THEY HAVE, OR SO MITTERRAND FEELS, TRIED TO CONTROL THE KIND AND DEGREE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST COMMUNITY'S SUPPORT FOR THE PSP; EQUALLY IRRITATING, MITTERRAND FEELS THAT THE NORTHERNERS HAVE TRIED TO UNDERCUT HIS ATTEMPTS TO SUGGEST WAYS OF DEALING WITH NATIONAL COMMUNIST PARTIES. SCHMIDT'S WELL-PUBLICIZED ATTACK MEANT THAT INSTEAD OF GETTING ANY INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR A REGIONAL FORM OF LIMITED ALLIANCES WITH THE NATIONAL COMMUNIST PARTIES, AT HELSINGOR MITTERRAND FOUND HIMSELF DEFENSIVELY REITERATING HIS EXPLANATIONS TO THE NORTHERNERS (DIFFERENT NATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES FORCE DIFFERENT FORMS OF LEFT COHESION).

5. GETTING READY FOR THE PARIS CONFERENCE: MITTERRAND THUS CAME BACK FROM HELSINGOR IN A CONSIDERABLY CHASTENED MOOD. IN ADDITION TO HIS MORE OR LESS PUBLIC QUARRELS WITH SCHMIDT, HE HAD ALSO LEARNED THAT SOARES WOULD DEFINITELY NOT ATTEND THE PARIS MEETING. IT IS ALSO LIKELY THAT ON HIS RETURN MITTERRAND LEARNED FOR THE FIRST TIME OF PORTUGUESE SOCIALIST INTENTIONS TO CLEARLY STATE THEIR OPPOSITION TO ALLIANCES WITH THE PC, AT LEAST INsofar AS SUCH A SOUTHERN ROAD MIGHT BE A PRESCRIPTION FOR IMMEDIATE APPLICATION. THUS, IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS RETURN, MITTERRAND BEGAN INSISTING THAT THE PARIS CONFERENCE WOULD BE A "CONSULTATION AND A CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING" FOCUSED ON PROBLEMS COMMON TO THE SOUTHERN SOCIALISTS. FACED WITH THE NEED TO TAKE THE "NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS" ROAD BY THE EVENTS AT

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HELSINGOR, MITTERRAND WAS SAID TO BE NERVOUS ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR THE PARIS CONFERENCE.

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6. ATTENDANCE AT PARIS -- A PUBLIC ISSUE: SOME TEN DAYS PRIOR TO HELSINGOR, RUMORS HAD STARTED CIRCULATING IN PARIS TO THE EFFECT THAT THE ITALIAN SOCIALISTS (PSI), PIQUED AT SOME UNOFFICIAL PS STATEMENTS ALLEGING THAT THEY HAD CHOSEN AN INOPPORTUNE MOMENT FOR CREATING A GOVERNMENT CRISIS, HAD EITHER DEMANDED A POSTPONEMENT OF THE PARIS MEETING OR HAD SAID THEY WOULD NOT ATTEND. THE PARIS PRESS WAS SPECULATING ON THE POSSIBILITY THAT SOARES AND THE PORTUGUESE MIGHT BOYCOTT THE MEETING IN ORDER TO PUT FURTHER DISTANCE BETWEEN THEMSELVES AND ANY POSSIBLE IMPUTATION OF A PSP/PCP ALLIANCE. THE PS INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT REACTED TO THE NEWS WITH SILENCE, BUT PRIVATELY ADMITTED THAT BOTH SETS OF RUMORS WERE TRUE. IT WAS NOT UNTIL THE TUESDAY AFTER HELSINGOR THAT BOTH PSP AND PSI ATTENDANCE WAS SETTLED -- NEITHER PARTY ACTUALLY SENT ITS TOP MAN.

7. THE GREEK OBSERVER -- A SPECIAL CASE: ANDREAS PAPANDREOU HAD EXPRESSED HIS INTEREST IN BEING AN OBSERVER AT HELSINGOR TO MITTERRAND AND, POSSIBLY, TO FELIPE GONZALEZ OF THE SPANISH SOCIALISTS. SINCE PAPANDREOU'S PASOK PARTY IS NOT A MEMBER OF THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL, MITTERRAND ADVISED PAPANDREOU NOT TO PRESS HIS REQUEST; PAPANDREOU AGREED, BUT PROMPTLY TURNED AROUND TO ASK FOR AN INVITATION TO THE PARIS CONFERENCE AS AN OBSERVER. AFTER BEING LOBBIED BY SOME OF THE MEMBERS OF THE PARTY'S LEFT-WING CERES, MITTERRAND AGREED AND INSTRUCTED HIS STAFF TO POLL THE OTHER SOUTHERN PARTIES. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE SPANISH, ALL AGREEMENTS HAD BEEN RECEIVED PRIOR TO THE HELSINGOR MEETING; GONZALEZ GAVE HIS ACCORD ON JANUARY 20. PAPANDREOU WAS INVITED AS AN "OBSERVER FROM A BROTHER PARTY", THUS NEATLY AVOIDING THE PROBLEM OF A PS CHOICE BETWEEN RECOGNIZING EITHER THE PASOK OR THE GREEK SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS.

8. THE CONFERENCE -- PRACTICAL POLITICS BAR IDEOLOGICAL HARMONY: IN A SENSE, MITTERRAND WAS HOISTED BY HIS OWN PETARD. HAVING BEEN FORCED INTO THE BY-NOW FAMILIAR TERRITORY OF NATIONAL DETERMINATION OF POLITICAL LINES,

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HE COULD HARDLY OBJECT TO THE INDEPENDENCE SHOWN BY THE PORTUGUESE AND SPANISH (REFTEL). THE WORKING GROUP SESSIONS WERE TOUGH, NOISY AND BLUNT DISCUSSIONS OF POLITICAL PROSPECTS AND PROSPECTIVE ALLIANCES FOR THE MAJOR SOCIALIST PARTIES. ONE PS STAFFER, GLOOMILY SURVEYING THE DELEGATES AT THE END OF THE CONFERENCE, WAS REMINDED THAT "THE SOUTHERN ROAD IS TURNING OUT TO LEAD ACROSS THE RANGE OF POSSIBLE LEFT ALLIANCES INTO THE SWAMPS OF POSSIBLE ALLIANCES ACROSS THE ENTIRE POLITICAL SPECTRUM." INDEED MOST OBSERVERS CONCLUDED THAT THE ITALIANS WERE ALL-BUT-PUBLICLY-REGRETTING THAT IT WAS THE COMMUNISTS AND NOT THEY WHO HAD MADE THE "HISTORIC COMPROMISE"; THE PORTUGUESE AND THE SPANISH WERE BUSILY PUTTING MAXIMUM AMOUNTS OF DISTANCE BETWEEN THEMSELVES AND ANY POSSIBLE ALLIANCE WITH THE COMMUNISTS.

9. COMMENT: ANTI-AMERICANISM -- PRESENT BUT DIMINISHED: MOST SOCIALIST IDEOLOGICAL MEETINGS HAVE THEIR QUOTA OF ANTI-AMERICAN RHETORIC, AND THE CONFERENCE WAS NO EXCEPTION. THE USG WAS VARIOUSLY ACCUSED OF ECONOMIC IMPERIALISM, POLITICAL ADVENTURISM AND OF IGNORING THE EUROPEANS IN THE QUEST FOR DETENTE. BUT IN COMPARISON WITH THE RHETORIC OF THE PAU CONGRESS OF THE FRENCH PS (JANUARY, 1975) AND OTHER SIMILAR MEETINGS, PS ORATORS WERE MORE RESTRAINED. A NOTABLE EXCEPTION TO SUCH RESTRAINT WAS MARSEILLE DEPUTY/MAYOR GASTON DEFFERRE, WHOSE INSISTENCE ON INCLUDING A SPECIFIC MENTION OF THE CIA (REFTEL) SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN THE RESULT OF HIS CONTINUING FEUD WITH MITTERRAND AND HIS ANGER OVER RECENT US DEMARCHES (SEPTELS). MITTERRAND AND THE PS, AS WELL AS SOME OTHER EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS, OBVIOUSLY FIND IT EASIER AND POLITICALLY MORE EXPEDIENT TO TAKE THE DEMAGOGIC ROUTE OF CONTINUALLY MAKING THE US INTO A PUBLICLY-WHIPPED BOGEYMAN.

10. COMMENT -- THE SOUTHERN ROAD IS NOW, AT BEST, A PATH: MITTERRAND WILL NOW HAVE TO SHELVE ANY THOUGHT OF MAKING THE SOUTHERN ROAD INTO A COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF STRATEGY TO BE FOLLOWED IN ANY NEAR-TERM FUTURE. INSTEAD OF BEING ABLE TO GAIN WHATEVER INTERNATIONAL LEGITIMIZATION THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL IS STILL CAPABLE

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OF CONFERRING, MITTERRAND HAD TO DEFEND ONE MORE TIME THE NATIONAL BASIS FOR POLITICAL STRATEGY. INSTEAD OF ARRIVING AT A CLEARLY DEFINED REGIONAL CONSENSUS ON

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TACTICS, MITTERRAND FOUND THAT THE SOUTHERN SOCIALISTS' CONCEPTIONS OF THEIR NATIONAL PROBLEMS ARE WILDLY DIFFERENT. WHAT WILL PROBABLY REMAIN IN MITTERRAND'S MIND -- AND WHAT IS ALREADY THE THINKING OF SOME OF HIS SENIOR ADVISORS -- IS THAT HIS ROUTE TO POWER IS MORE DEFENSIBLE AS A FRENCH THAN AS A SOUTHERN ROAD. HOWEVER, HIS COMPETITION WITH SCHMIDT WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN MITTERRAND'S RELATIONS WITH THE INTERNATIONAL AND ITS COMPONENT PARTIES. ONE SHORT-TERM RESULT OF THE CONFERENCE IS LIKELY TO BE A PS DECISION TO QUIETLY DROP ITS SUPPORT FOR SOARES' PROPOSED EIGHT PARTY CONFERENCE OF SOUTHERN COMMUNIST AND SOCIALIST PARTIES.

11. COMMENT -- IDEOLOGY, PRACTICAL POLITICS AND THE SOUTHERN ROAD: IN A DIMINISHED FORM THE SOUTHERN ROAD WILL CONTINUE TO EXIST. MITTERRAND AND THE PARTY'S LEFT (CERES) ARE IN TOTAL AGREEMENT THAT THE LOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF A SOCIALIST POSITION IN ANY OF THE FOUR COUNTRIES REPRESENTED AT THE CONFERENCE REQUIRE SOME UNITY OF ALL LEFT FORCES. BUT THE REAL DIFFERENCE LIES OVER THE RELATIVE PRIORITIES TO BE ACCORDED TO PRACTICAL POLITICS AND IDEOLOGY: FOR THE CERES AND GASTON DEFFERRE, IT IS NOW TIME TO CREATE IDEOLOGICAL PURITY IN THE SOUTHERN SOCIALIST PARTIES. FOR MITTERRAND, ABOVE ALL A PRACTICAL POLITICIAN, ONLY THE INDIVIDUAL PARTIES CAN KNOW WHEN SUCH ALLIANCES CAN BE MADE WITHOUT LOSING ELECTORAL POPULARITY AND WITHOUT BEING EATEN ALIVE BY THE NATIONAL COMMUNIST PARTIES.

12. COMMENT -- MITTERRAND'S FUTURE RELATIONS WITH THE SOUTHERNERS: MITTERRAND WILL FOR A TIME PULL BACK ON THE SOUTHERN ROAD, BUT HE WILL INSIST THAT THERE ARE COMMON SOUTHERN PROBLEMS WHICH MUST BE DEALT WITH BY SOUTHERNERS. HE WILL GIVE SCHMIDT NO REAL COMFORT IN THE MONTHS TO COME. HE WILL NEITHER DROP NOR ALTER HIS ALLIANCE WITH THE PCF AS A RESULT OF INTERNATIONAL URGING. HE WILL PROBABLY CONVENE A SECOND MEETING OF THE HEADS OF SOUTHERN SOCIALIST PARTIES (LATCHES II) PRIOR TO THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL'S SUMMER MEETING IN

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GENEVA. AND HE WILL INSIST THAT WHAT HAPPENED IN PARIS

WAS MERELY THE BEGINNING OF A CONTINUING SEARCH FOR A
SOCIALIST IDENTITY IN SOUTHERN EUROPE.
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